

LAUNCHPOINT

PITCH COMPETITION

HANDBOOK

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THE LAUNCH POINT PITCH COMPETITION

Overview

About the Competition

The Launch Point Pitch Competition returns in 2024 with its high-energy platform to elevate early-stage entrepreneurs on their start-up journey. It provides new founders and post-secondary students in the Lethbridge Region with an opportunity to pitch, validate, and help launch their business ideas.

Competitors will be challenged to convey:

- the need for their business solution;
- their ability to create and deliver their business idea; and
- their ability to build a sustainable business that will grow over time.

Important Dates

January 5, 2024 – LPPC – Registration Opens - Post-Secondary and General Community Streams

February 12, 2024 – LPPC – Round 1 – Video Pitch Submission Deadline

Feb 14 to Mar 1, 2024 – LPPC – Round 1 – Public Voting & Judges Review Period

February 20, 2024 – LPPC – Pitch Primer Presentation/Workshop by RINSA

March 1, 2024 – LPPC – Round 2 Finalists Announced

March 5, 2024 – AgENT Pitch Practice Session

March 12, 2024 – AgENT Pitch Practice Session

March 15, 2024 – Launch Point Pitch Competition – Event Day & Finals, Dinner + Networking

Competition Format

The Launch Point Pitch Competition has 2 streams in 2024 (Post-Secondary Student Stream & General Community Stream) and they involve two rounds of pitching:

Round 1: The 3-minute Video Pitch

The first round of pitches will be video submissions. Competitors will be submitting a recorded video of their pitch for evaluation and voting. Applicants who are accepted into the competition (i.e., those who complete the application form and submit their video) will be required to do so online to University of Lethbridge Agility team on our Launch Point website page

by Monday, February 12, 2024, at 12:00 PM MST. The Agility Team will review the pitches to ensure they have followed the required format and fall within the 3-minute pitch requirements. Any recordings that extend beyond the 3-minute mark will be **disqualified**.

Visit pages 7-10 for further information on judging criteria.

Round 1 will be judged by a panel of experts and participants will receive one piece of constructive feedback from each judge. The Top 3 contestants from each of the 3 streams will

be selected to move into Round 2 and compete live at the Launch Point Pitch Competition on Friday, March 15, 2024, at Lethbridge College. Round 2 contestants will be announced Friday, March 1, 2024, and will have two weeks to prepare for the live competition.

The Fan Favourite Award

Round 1 pitch competition video submissions will be posted on the Launch Point website (<https://www.ulethbridge.ca/agility/launch-point-pitch-competition>), by 3:00 pm Wednesday, February 14, 2024, and the general public will have until Friday, March 1, 2024, at 12:00 pm MST to vote for their favourite pitch. The pitch in each category with the most votes will be awarded the Fan Favourite and the winners for that will also be announced live at the Launch Point Pitch Competition on Friday, March 15, 2024. **An individual may only vote once, and only unique votes will be counted towards the final totals.**

Round 2: The 10-minute Live Pitch

The Top 3 contestants from each stream will pitch live at the Launch Point Pitch Competition, Friday, March 15, 2024. Each pitch will be up to 10-minutes in length and judged by a panel of experts. This panel will be comprised of the same judges from the first round of judges. The live pitch competition will be held at Lethbridge College from 1:00pm – 7:00 pm, and all Finalists invited into Round 2 will need to be available to pitch in person.

Pitch Competition Prizes

The Launch Point Pitch Competition will award seed funding for pitch competition winners. Seed funding is money to be invested in developing your business idea. This award will be put towards your business and can help to develop your first prototype, improve packaging, help to carry out marketing, purchase materials, etc. If you place first, second, or third, you must submit a proposal outlining the allocation of your seed funding.

<u>Post-Secondary Student Stream</u>	<u>General Community Stream</u>
First Place: \$2,000.00 Second Place: \$1,500.00 Third Place: \$1,000.00 Fan Favourite: \$500.00	First Place: \$2,000.00 Second Place: \$1,500.00 Third Place: \$1,000.00 Fan Favourite: \$500.00
<i>\$5,000.00 in Prizes for Post-Secondary Stream</i>	<i>\$5,000.00 in Prizes for Community Stream</i>

REQUIREMENTS

Competition Rules

1. Competitors must submit a complete application along with their video submission for Round 1. ***Incomplete applications will be rejected.***
2. All contestants must be 18 years of age or older to compete.
3. Submissions must be completed by a founder or a majority shareholder*.
4. If businesses are pitching as part of a team, the team must assign a “Team Lead”, or someone who will pitch on behalf of the team. The team lead must be a majority shareholder*. A maximum of 2 team members will be allowed to pitch in the video submission for Round 1 as well as the live pitch for Round 2.
5. Accepted competitors must pitch at both rounds of the competition, unless otherwise approved. If presenting as part of a team, the team lead must be consistent and appointed to pitch both in the first and second round of the competition, unless otherwise approved.
6. All information shared in your application and pitches are considered public knowledge. The University of Lethbridge and Community Futures Lethbridge Region are not required to hold any confidential information.
7. Judges must follow a standard judging rubric for all pitches. The decision of the judges is final. Judges are required to keep their contestant information and evaluations confidential.
8. Round 1 video submissions cannot exceed 3 minutes. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.
9. Round 1 competitors must agree to allow the University of Lethbridge and Community Futures Lethbridge Region to distribute and share pitch videos.
 - a. Participants will be asked to sign a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy form.
 - b. If you do not agree, you will not be eligible to compete for the Fan Favourite award.
10. Round 2 live pitches cannot exceed 10 minutes. Judges cannot evaluate past the 10-minute mark. Contestants will receive a warning when they have reached 10 minutes.

11. Round 2 pitches are considered to have commenced when the presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.
12. Round 2 competitors must agree to allow the University of Lethbridge and Community Futures to capture the presentation on video, and to distribute and/or share videos of their pitch for promotional purposes.
 - a. Participants will be asked to sign a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy form.
13. These rules are in effect unless otherwise overruled by the University of Lethbridge or Community Futures. Any changes to the rules will be communicated to all participants.
14. If you have any questions or concerns about the rules for the Post-Secondary Student Stream of the Launch Point Pitch Competition, please contact agility@uleth.ca. Any questions relating to the General Community Stream can be directed to eyren@uggentidigital.com

What is a majority shareholder? Depending on the amount of shareholders in the business, the person pitching **must own a majority of the business. For example, if there are two founders, the person pitching must own 50% or more of the business in order to pitch.*

If there are 4 shareholders, two who hold 40%, and two who hold 10%, the person giving the pitch must be the one of the shareholders who own 40%.

PITCH COMPETITION

Eligibility

Post-Secondary Student Stream Participation Eligibility

Eligible student participants must:

- Be post-secondary students that are currently taking three or more courses at the University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge College, or Red Crow College, **or must**
- Currently be taking a minimum of one course from the University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge College, or Red Crow College, **and** have taken at least three courses during the last 18 months, **or must**
- Have graduated from the University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge College, or Red Crow College within the last 12 months.

Participants should have come up with the idea and own at least 50% of the idea. They should also have not previously started and are not currently running a company that has:

- Sold more than \$10,000,
- Taken a loan of \$10,000, or
- Raised more than \$10,000 in capital/equity funding.

Top placing U of L students are nominated by the University of Lethbridge to compete at [150 Start-ups](#) (learn more about 150 Start-ups below) to compete for \$10,000 in seed funding. Occasionally, the top two teams are nominated, but only one nomination is guaranteed. If the nomination is rejected, the next top placing U of L team will be nominated until a nomination is accepted.

150 Start-ups (Student Stream Only)

One student entrepreneur (team) will be selected to attend the 150 Startups Kickoff Weekend, hosted by Bow Valley College. The kickoff weekend is held at the beginning of May and ends with a regionally based pitch competition for Alberta's top student entrepreneurs. Student entrepreneurs will be competing for \$10,000 and a [Draper U](#) placement.

The first-place winner of the Launch Point Pitch Competition Post-Secondary Student Stream will most likely be offered the opportunity to participate in the 150 Startups Competition. In the case the first-place winner does not qualify or wish to participate in the competition, Agility will share the opportunity with second place, third place, and so on until a nomination is accepted.

General Community Stream

Participation Eligibility

1. Individuals (18 years and older as of January 1st, 2024) or teams (one member must be 18 years or older as of January 1st, 2024).
2. Launch Point Pitch Competition is primarily open to new businesses and new business ideas. Existing business owners who have a business idea or strategy that is a shift from their regular line(s) of business are welcome to compete (eligibility of the shift away from regular lines of business will be reviewed and eligibility determined by the Organizing Committee).
3. Teams must be living or working in the RINSA Region (Okotoks to the US Border, East of Taber to the BC Border.) which has been expanded from last year which was exclusively the Community Futures Lethbridge Region (Barons, Blood Band Reserve, Broxburn, Coaldale, Coalhurst, Del Bonita, Diamond City, Iron Springs, Kipp, Lethbridge (city and county), Magrath, Nobleford, Picture Butte, Raymond, Shaughnessy, Spring Coulee, Stand Off, Stirling, Tempest, Turin, Welling, and other surrounding communities).
4. Teams must have one member designated as the Team Leader. The Team Leader will be the primary contact person for the team, be of legal age, and will be responsible for all communications to and from the Launch Point Organizing Committee on behalf of his or her team. They will also be required to be in each round (Round 1 & Round 2).
5. A new business will have been in operation less than one (1) year. A new business idea will not be actualized or operational as of January 31, 2024. An existing business who has a shift idea will have been in business less than five (5) years.
6. New businesses and new business ideas must have not generated more than \$100,000 in revenues in the last year. An existing business who has a shift idea must not have generated more than \$10,000 in annual revenues from the shift idea.
7. The proposed business idea must be located in the Launch Point region (as defined in Participation Eligibility criteria #3).
8. While full participation in the Launch Point Pitch Competition training sessions and events are encouraged, it is not mandatory to enter Round 1.
9. All Round 1 video pitch entries must be submitted no later than 11:59 a.m. on Monday, February 12, 2024, to be eligible.

Ineligible to participate for prizes

A participant is able to participate in the Launch Point Pitch Competition, but is ineligible to compete for prizes if they do not meet all the eligibility requirements;

1. are a member of the Launch Point Pitch Competition Organizing Committee or Judge (or any partner or business associate of a Judge), Community Futures staff member (or staff equivalent), or any of the immediate family of the above that are on a team, is a mentor in the current competition year or operates with some formal business relationship with a Participant;

2. solicits a Judge(s) directly or indirectly, in which case the Participant will be disqualified.
3. exhibits conduct which is unlawful, would reflect poorly on the reputation of the Launch Point Pitch Competition, is harmful with malicious intent to any of the sponsors in any way, or for any other reason at the discretion of the Organizing Committee.

General

All claims regarding eligibility will be considered until March 31, 2024.

1. Any pitches that include profanity, reference to sex, religion, and/or illegal activity will be automatically disqualified.
2. Decisions made by the Judges are only subject to ratification by the Organizing Committee. Decisions made by the Judges on Friday, March 1, 2024, and Friday, March 15, 2024, are final. In the event a winner does not meet the requirements for the use of funds or is disqualified for any reason, the cash will be reallocated to the future operations of the Launch Point Pitch Competition. Any other prizes will be under discretion of the Organizing Committee.
3. The Organizing Committee has the right to refuse entry to any individual or team.
4. All decisions made by the Organizing Committee are final.
5. The Organizing Committee has the right to amend this document and the conduct of the Launch Point Pitch Competition at its discretion even if it has commenced.
6. The Organizing Committee and the Judges have the authority not to award a prize or prizes if, in their sole unfettered discretion, they feel that the nature of the submissions tendered were not of the type or quality contemplated in the Launch Point Pitch Competition.

Disclaimer

By registering for the Launch Point Pitch Competition, you will be participating in an event where video, photography, and audio recording may occur. When you participate in the Launch Point Pitch Competition, you consent to video recording, audio recording, photography, and interview(s) and their publication, release and reproduction for social media, news, promotions, telecasts, advertising, inclusion on web sites or any purpose(s) that the Agility Lab, University of Lethbridge, and Community Futures Lethbridge Region deems fit to use. You release Community Futures Lethbridge Region, its Board, officers, employees, sponsors, partners and each and all persons involved from any liability connected with recording, talking, digitizing, publication of interviews, photographs, computer images, and video and/or audio recordings.

By participating in the event, you waive all rights you may have to any claims for payment or royalties in connection with any exhibition, webcasting, streaming, televising, or other publication of these material, regardless of the purpose or sponsoring of such exhibiting, broadcasting, webcasting, or any other publication irrespective of whether a fee for admission or sponsorship is charged. You waive any right to inspect or approve any photo, video, or audio recording taken by Community Futures Lethbridge Region and its partners and sponsors. **You have been fully informed of your consent, waiver of liability, and release before participating in the Launch Point event.**

Prizes

Finalists must disclose how they would utilize the prize money. The use of funds must be verified in writing by the participant and may be subject to an audit at the discretion of the Organizing Committee. **Copies of receipts to verify must be submitted to the Organizing Committee by December 31, 2024.**

JUDGING CRITERIA

Round 1

Round 1 video submissions will be judged by a panel of 3 experts between Wednesday, February 14, 2024, and Friday, March 1, 2024. Video submissions must be 3 minutes or less. The Top 3 participants from the Post-Secondary Student and General Community streams will be announced the afternoon of Friday, March 1, 2024. Runner-ups (in 4th and 5th place) will be notified and will have the opportunity to pitch if one or two of the top three finalists are not able to pitch live on Friday, March 15, 2024.

The Problem:

Identify the problem that you are looking to solve or the opportunity your product/service provides. Who does this affect? Tips: Be clear in describing why the customer/audience needs this problem to be solved. This is a great section to use an emotional connection.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify the problem they're looking to solve?	
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify who this affects? (target market)	

The Solution:

Explain your product or service, and how it relates to the problem you just identified. Talk about the benefits your solution provides and answer the basic questions: "what does your product/service do?", "how is it unique?", "how does it address the problem you've identified?".

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did the pitch contestant clearly explain what makes their solution (product/service) unique?	
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify how their solution addresses the problem they've identified?	

How Will You Make Money?:

Identify your core revenue streams, i.e., how you plan on making money. Present your anticipated sources of income. Financial breakdowns are not required for this round of pitching.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did they identify their core revenue streams?	
Are these revenue streams viable based on the information they've provided?	

Your “Ask”:

End your pitch with an “ask”; what are you looking for to help move your business forward? “Asks” don’t always have to be financial. Some examples could include funding, mentorship, a team member, resources, training, a network, etc. Reflect on your business and incorporate what you think you will need moving forward.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did they identify an appropriate ask that will help advance their business?	
Did they identify their team members? And/or the next immediate person they would like to bring on?	

Pitch Delivery:

Entrepreneurs will need to demonstrate their skills as a presenter. Entrepreneurs will be tasked to illustrate speaker presence and pitch delivery. Things entrepreneurs will consider for this section include the aesthetics of their pitch deck and their own presence.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Delivery: Was the presenter clear, professional, and enthusiastic?	
Pitch Deck: Was the pitch deck clear, engaging, and relevant?	

Round 2

Round 2 live pitch presentations will be judged by a different panel of 3 experts on Friday, March 15, 2024, at Lethbridge College. In this round of judging, pitches will be judged in real time, and with a short deliberation period after each stream. The Post-Secondary Student Stream will pitch first, and the General Community Stream will pitch following a short intermission.

The Problem:

Identify the problem that you are looking to solve or the opportunity your product/service provides. Who does this affect? Tips: Be clear in describing why the customer/audience needs this problem to be solved. This is a great section to use an emotional connection.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify the problem they’re looking to solve?	
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify who this affects? (target market)	

The Solution:

Explain your product or service, and how it relates to the problem you just identified. Talk about the benefits your solution provides and answer the basic questions: “what does your product/service do?”, “how does it work?”, “how does it address the problem you’ve identified?”.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did the pitch contestant clearly explain what makes their solution (product/service) unique?	
Did the pitch contestant clearly identify how their solution addresses the problem they've identified?	

Revenue Projections:

Identify your core revenue streams, i.e., how you plan on making money. Present your anticipated sources of income. Build off your core revenue streams and create an anticipated financial projection for the next year. Identify your biggest operational costs and how much these costs will be in the next year.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did they identify their core revenue streams? Are these revenue streams viable based on the information they've provided?	
Did they identify their operational costs? Are these costs viable based on the information they've provided?	

Now, Next, Later Plan:

The Now, Next, Later plan is a flexible framework that helps identify and communicate goals, direction, and a plan. It shows what is currently being worked on, what's next, and what is further ahead, without committing to hard-and-fast deadlines.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did they identify what they're working on within the next 3 weeks ? Does this seem viable based on the information provided?	
Did they identify what they're working on within the next 3 months ? Does this seem viable based on the information provided?	
Feasibility of scaling. Does this idea seem feasible based on the information they've provided?	

Your "Ask":

End your pitch with an "ask"; what are you looking for to help move your business forward? "Asks" don't always have to be financial. Some examples could include funding, mentorship, a team member, resources, training, a network, etc. Reflect on your business and incorporate what you think you will need moving forward.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Did they identify an appropriate ask that will help advance their business?	
Did they identify their team members? And/or the next immediate person they would like to bring on?	

Pitch Delivery:

Entrepreneurs will need to demonstrate their skills as a presenter. Entrepreneurs will be tasked to illustrate speaker presence and pitch delivery. Things entrepreneurs will consider for this section include the aesthetics of their pitch deck and their own presence.

Judging Criteria	Score (0-10)
Delivery: Was the presenter clear, professional, and enthusiastic?	
Pitch Deck: Was the pitch deck clear, engaging, and relevant?	

PITCH COMPETITION WORKSHOPS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Optional pitch competition training and support will be provided to all participants, and participation in these events and workshops is encouraged but not mandatory.

Cover Your Assets | Protecting Your Intellectual Property

Are you looking to learn more about intellectual property? This series will cover all the basics of the different types of intellectual property and will help get you started on your IP journey. Attend an individual session or a minimum of four sessions to receive a certificate of completion and recognition.

Wednesdays 5:30 – 7:00 pm, January 17th – February 14th, 2024

- Week 1: Overview | What is intellectual property? | January 17th
- Week 2: Patents | January 24th
- Week 3: Trademarks | January 31st
- Week 4: Copyright & Industrial Design | February 7th
- Week 5: Intellectual Property Ownership & Funding Opportunities | February 14th

Learn more about the series and register [here](#).

Trailblazing | Building Your Idea Into a Business

Trailblazing is a 6-week program that will help you design a fool-proof business based on an idea. You will learn how to think like an entrepreneur, which will help you become a better problem solver and thinker. Trailblazing will help you either start your own business or gain a competitive advantage in landing your dream job.

In-person sessions: Tuesdays 6:00 – 9:00 pm, January 30th – March 12th, 2024

- WEEK 1: Find Customers for Your New Business | January 30th
- WEEK 2: Make Your Idea Unbeatable | February 6th
- WEEK 3: Beat Out the Competition | February 13th
- WEEK 4: Make Money in Your New Business | February 27th
- WEEK 5: Build Your New Business Idea | March 5th
- WEEK 6: Pitching Your New Idea for Results | March 12th

Learn more about the series and register [here](#).

1-1 Mentorship Sessions

You can request Mentorship Sessions through Agility at the U of L or AgENT at Lethbridge College if you're enrolled in the Student Stream. If joining the General Community Stream, you're welcome to seek supports through RINSA (www.rinsa.ca), Community Futures Lethbridge Region (<https://lethbridgeregion.albertacf.com>) and BIPOC Foundation (www.bipocfoundation.org). You can also participate in the pitch training sessions or can reach out to our organizers to get assistance in finding and connecting with resources.

Register at www.bit.ly/launchpoint2024 to Sign Up for the Launch Point Pitch Competition and stay up-to-date on all the supports via our event organizers.

Pitch Feedback Sessions

Some of the pitch training activities will allow for you to gain feedback and pointers on strengthening and practicing for your future business pitches. It is highly recommended that you engage with these offerings whether you become a finalist in the competition or not.

The Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta (RINSA)

The ultimate goal of all Regional Innovation Networks (RINs) across the province is to create community-based networks of programs and services to accelerate the growth of technology and knowledge-based entrepreneurs and venture development. RINSA collectively assists start-ups and small businesses to successfully navigate the commercialization system through programs, services, and resources.

View all their events and resources [here](#).

The Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta (RINSA) was formed in 2011 as a collaborative partnership and has since grown to over 10 member organizations:

- University of Lethbridge
- Tecconnect and Economic Development Lethbridge
- Lethbridge College
- National Research Council – Industrial Research Assistance Program
- Alberta Innovates
- Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce
- Okotoks Economic Development
- Piikani Resource Development
- Blood Tribe Economic Development
- Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council
- Community Futures
- Southgrow Regional Initiative
- Alberta Southwest Regional Economic Development
- BIPOC Foundation

View the partner list [here](#).

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